

Four Arrested for Stealing at KOW

Security and intelligence agents at the Joliet Arsenal yesterday thwarted the attempts of four men to take 1,050 feet of copper tubing from the Kankakee Ordnance works, stopping the quartet just as they were about to leave the Arsenal grounds.

This was the third theft case crack-down in recent weeks by the government intelligence agents at the Arsenal. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been called to investigate the thefts and prosecution is being considered in all cases.

The four men stopped yesterday as they were about to drive a government truck off the Arsenal grounds with the copper tubing, were employed by a sub-contractor doing renovation work at the Kankakee unit. They are not employees of U.S. Rubber company, which is the operating contractor, or the government, it was emphasized by Col. Raymond C. Costabile, commanding officer at Joliet Arsenal.

TWO OF THE MEN are from Joliet, the third man from Verna and the fourth man from Wilmington. They were not named by authorities.

Theft of government property is a violation of the federal law and in these three cases where the value was in excess of \$100 in each instance the maximum penalty, if the persons are prosecuted and found guilty, is \$10,000 fine or 10 years imprisonment or both.

Friday, in the second recent theft at the Elwood plant, a Coal City man was questioned at his home. There acetylene torch tips, welding and cutting equipment, valued at approximately \$110, were found. It was identified as taken off the Arsenal grounds.

THIS MATTER is under investigation already by the FBI. At the conclusion of the investigation information will be presented to the U.S. attorney in Chicago, the FBI reported. The Coal City man carried the materials from the Arsenal in his lunch bucket. Security agents knew the items were in his lunch bucket but allowed him to get out of the area and to his home where they then questioned him and found the material, according to Col. Costabile.

At present, 4,000 persons are employed at the Arsenal. They are spot checked thru the gate and must have necessary identification to get in and out of the area.

Attempts by persons to carry valuable government property from the area hidden in their lunch buckets, their trouser cuffs and other concealed areas have been made often but usually not by employees of the Arsenal itself, Costabile said.

YESTERDAY'S attempted theft of government property was made thruout the afternoon. The copper tubing, valued at about \$250 was moved around several times inside the plant by the men before it was finally put on a truck by them. They thought they would be able to drive it thru the gates and get outside the area on a working pass. But as the men neared the gates, they were already under the scrutiny of the security agents who knew about their plans almost from the beginning. As scores of workers were about to leave the area for the day, the four were nabbed in a quiet manner, but word soon spread to those waiting in line to leave work that the men were attempting to steal the material.

A third case which occurred in June is now pending in the U.S. district court. At that time a Kankakee man stole approximately \$3,000 worth of government material, including lumber for his home, paint to paint the home and even an old kitchen sink

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off the salvage area to put into the home.

"THE SECURITY division here is keeping a constant check and will continue to crack down on violators or would be violators," Col. Costabile said today. "The persons who attempt to take this material, hide it sometimes in their lunch buckets or in a field and go back later and pick up the materials when they think they are not under scrutiny. They feel if they make it to their car outside the gates, they are safe. However, as in Friday's instance, an arrest can be made by agents of the federal government when government property is involved."

All four employees yesterday were immediately dismissed from their jobs. The persons suspected of theft in the other two cases also were immediately dismissed from employment by their employers.